

GEOGRAPHICAL IMPACTS OF EASTERN GERMANY'S INCLUSION WITHIN THE EU: 1990-2014

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with 6 figures and 6 tables in the text

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Summary

By way of German unification, Eastern Germany experienced European Union (EU) expansion much earlier than other formerly Socialist Central European states and also under rather unique circumstances. Inclusion within the FRG has had much greater implications for virtually everything and everyone in the eastern states, including Berlin, than inclusion within the EU. There are of course, many advantages that derived from unification, as well as disadvantages and changes that might be considered some combination of each. Imbedded within these impacts are also the often intertwined impacts of inclusion within the EU. Simultaneously, exposure also increased due to globalisation – a force already strongly affecting the FRG and the EU at the time of unification.

This paper attempts to provide a synthesis of geographical and geographically related impacts of East German inclusion within the EU – to the extent that this can be discerned from the closely related impacts of German unification. Impacts from the EU

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in the eastern states are easily recognisable in sizeable financial commitments, including investment assistance for infrastructural, industrial, and agricultural activities, as well as assistance for urban planning and social programs. The nature of the multinational EU and applications of its regulations also increased economic, social, and cultural exposure of the East to, for example, increased tourism and investments, and increased immigration by foreigners. EU, Bund, and local initiatives also increased cross-border interaction and began a process to heal the damages of 20th century wars and subsequent disputes with Germany's Polish and Czech neighbours. Somewhat ironically, some impacts of the latter process were also muted by the German decision to invoke EU-allowed 'waiting periods' for most workers from the EU-8 and EU-2, which very likely resulted in greater Polish interaction with the United Kingdom, France, and Ireland between 2004 and 2011 than would otherwise have been the case. However, large numbers of Poles also now live and work in Eastern Germany, and in 1990 the FRG once more also regained an international border with Poland and an extended one with what has become Czechia.

The overview of impacts of Eastern German inclusion in the EU includes brief sections on a range of geographically related issues, including ownership and production in the economic sphere (within and outside of Germany) as well as transportation and international trade, migration and tourism, bilateral neighbourly relations, and a glimpse of changed geopolitical relationships in northern Central Europe.

1 Overview

In late 2014, scores of researchers from across Central Europe and beyond met in Vienna [Wien] for two days to assess: "10 Years of EU Eastern Enlargement – The Geographical Balance of a Courageous Step". In fact, one of the first steps toward European Union (EU) enlargement further eastward into Central Europe occurred in 1990 when the people and new leaders of the then German Democratic Republic (GDR) chose to join with the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) to form a unified Germany. The coalescence of the East German state into its neighbouring West German state led directly to all of Eastern Germany becoming a part of the European Union within a single German state that includes a very large proportion of the people who identify themselves as German. This also created an EU member state much larger than any other. German unification has had profound economic and political impacts within the EU, as clearly evidenced by Germany's roles during late 2014 and early 2015 within the Ukrainian and Greek crises that confront the EU.

This paper investigates the narrower, yet still important, geographically-related impacts on Eastern Germany from inclusion within the EU. These impacts are intertwined with both the impacts of German unification itself and the on-going impacts

of globalisation on the region and united Germany. They are not very often covered or investigated, in part because the “former East Germany, which has naturally followed a different path than the other transition economies” (IMF 2014, p. v) is viewed as different from the Central European states that joined the EU in 2004 (EU-8). Another factor is that institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that deal directly with national governments would do so with united Germany and not a region now within it.

‘Eastern’ Germany is generally accepted to mean the five ‘new Länder’ plus Berlin, the latter a German Land/state that is comprised of what was once divided, now united Berlin. While East Berlin functioned as the capital of the GDR, West Berlin had a special post-war political status that allowed it *de facto*, but not complete, international recognition or formal association within either the FRG or EU. Post-unification, therefore, the territory of the former GDR and West Berlin (i.e., Eastern Germany) became, at the same time, officially recognised as part of both the FRG and EU.

Some of the most important impacts of Eastern German inclusion within the EU are more political than geographical (e.g., the truly revolutionary changes in political conditions for people and the institutions in the former GDR), and some of the most profound geographical changes are more related to West-East German political and economic relations than EU-Eastern German relationships. Still, early inclusion of Eastern Germany into the EU has had a number of important impacts for it, for all of Germany, and to a more limited extent for Central Europe.

The economic and intertwined demographic impacts of the sudden, new realities of German political unification on Eastern Germany were and are possibly the most important geographically-related impacts for it in the post-unification and EU era. However, there have also been several important geopolitical impacts from Eastern German accession to the EU, which will be outlined in this paper.

2 Economic impacts

While the GDR was a leader technologically and economically within the ‘Soviet Bloc’, both it and the latter lagged far behind the FRG and the rest of the ‘West’. GDR citizens’ stature and pride owing to the relative position of their state plummeted as they experienced both the gulf between economic realities in East vs. West and the relatively poor competitiveness of many Eastern German producers. People and economic entities in the East quickly struggled to adapt to both far greater competition for jobs and markets within the capitalist West and to succeed within entirely changed political conditions determined by the more politically powerful leaders and economically more competitive Western firms. Eastern German economic

conditions were much poorer in 1990 than those in Western Germany, and during the early 1990s, despite massive transfers eastward of support and investment, as in other parts of Central Europe, employment conditions worsened very badly (Table 1). And, unlike the even poorer – but also independent – former GDR’s neighbour states, some of these economic conditions, most notably unemployment levels, have improved only relatively slowly, following a short period of rapid growth in the 1990s. The latter development was related to a socio-political decision to try to raise East German wage and income standards toward West German levels as quickly as possible, resulting in relatively expensive labour conditions in the East and lagging employment levels (ROTHER & SÜPPEL 2003). In short, policies to narrow the original East-West German income gap by way of subsidies and labour policies have come with the costs of continued, expensive interregional tax transfers and a lagging East German labour market, despite much commuting and migration by Eastern workers toward the West (Table 2).

Table 1: Eastern German employment and population, 1991-2013

	1991	2001	2011	2013
employment (000s)	~7,300	7,258	7,697	7,679
population (000s)	18,185	17,232	16,326	16,303

Data source: EUROSTAT 2015

Table 2: Approximate GDP/capita index levels in Central Europe, 1990-2014

	1990		1991	1995	2005	2014
West Germany	100 ¹	Germany	100	100	100	100
		Western	115	114	108	106 ²
		Eastern	49 (66) ³	50	73	76 ² (86) ³
East Germany	43 ¹					
Czechoslovakia	44	Czechia		54	65	63
		Slovakia		40	53	61
Poland	24	Poland		33	45	55
Hungary	33	Hungary		46	60	54

Sources: BUTSCHK 1994; BUNDESMINISTERIUM FÜR WIRTSCHAFT UND ENERGIE 2014; EUROSTAT 2015; KNOEMA 2015

¹ 1991
² 2013
³ (disposable income)

Table 3: **Unemployment levels (percent) 1995-2014**

	1995 ¹	2005	2014
Germany	8.1	7.6	4.7
West ²	9	11	6
East ²	15	20	10
Czechia	3.3	6.8	5.4
Slovakia	10.1	14.4	11.8
Poland	9.3	15.2	7.6
Hungary	8.4	6.1	8.9

Sources: EUROSTAT 2015; BUNDESAGENTUR FÜR ARBEITSSTATISTIK 2015; BLUM et al. 2011

¹ Some values are from 1996, 1997, 1998.

² The calculation basis varies from the EUROSTAT comparative international data.

Efforts by the German central government (Bund), the German states, and the EU to improve infrastructure, living conditions, and the Eastern German economy have certainly been undertaken. Estimates are that declining but still on-going transfer payments from West to East in Germany now approach two trillion Euros over the past 25 years. Part of the efforts have been funded throughout the time period by a variety of EU programs that also support regional development in other Central European EU states. For example, substantial efforts have been made within a “Joint Task Program” by the Bund, states and EU to increase investments in economic enterprises that also further leverage private investments and result in increased employment. GEFRA & IAB (2010) has estimated that about 27% of funding for Eastern German enterprise investment support from 1991 through 2008 came from the EU, mostly by way of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) (see Table 4). A somewhat higher proportion of overall funding for jointly funded Bund-ERDF research and development initiatives has also been coming from the EU (GEFRA & IAB 2010). Between 2003 and 2008 data from FINPRO (2010) suggest that Joint Task Program subsidies of about nine billion Euros over the period helped leverage a total of 82 billion Euros more in investments. Funding has continued past 2009 within the Joint Task Program at about the 2000-2008 levels. Overall, recent estimates suggest that the efforts have likely raised recent Eastern German income and employment by a relatively small, but in absolute terms important 1.4% to 1.5% (BRANDT & SCHWAB 2013). Given the massive levels of domestic support from within Germany itself, EU funding is relatively less critical than in the EU-8 countries that joined in 2004 (e.g., BUSCH 2014).

Table 4: **Joint Task Program investment grants in Eastern Germany, 1991-2008**
(billions of Euros per year)

1991:	3.7
1992-94:	2.5
1994-99:	2.2
2000-01:	1.5
2002-03:	1.4
2004-08:	1.3
2009-13:	1.3

Sources: GEFRA & IAB 2010; BRANDT & SCHWAB 2013

Still, overall Eastern German income and employment outcomes also emanate from the combined impacts of intra-German wage and income levelling policies put in place by Germany in the face of stiff national, EU, and other international competition for Eastern Germany to compete as a production and employment base (BLAU 2010; DORNBUSCH & WOLF 1994). Lower wages in other parts of Central Europe and higher levels of labour productivity in Western Germany mean that Eastern Germany has not competed well for production-oriented jobs, either within Germany or the EU, despite growing economic opportunities as the result of both growth in Germany and the expanded EU market, especially with EU widening since 2004. Eastern Germany’s former Socialist trade partners – notably Poland, Czechia and Slovakia, and Hungary – have all substantially expanded their exports to Germany in recent years (BERENTSEN 2012), in part owing to burgeoning foreign direct investments (FDI) in those countries (DEUTSCHE BUNDESBANK EUROSISTEM 2014; LEHMANN et al. 2012). Ironically, while being geographically near Germany is a major advantage for the EU-8 countries (IMF 2014), actually being within it also generates some, possibly unique, disadvantages for Eastern Germany.

Besides the continued lag in employment growth, the East German employment structure has also veered from being heavily manufacturing-oriented under state Socialist rule to a relatively export-lagging, service sector orientation in recent decades, made palatable by massive, continuing transfer funds from Western to the Eastern Germany and slowly recovering manufacturing sector employment that had plummeted in the immediate aftermath of unification. Construction employment remains important but also now plays a lesser role than in the 1990s, when especially German, but also EU funding was being poured into infrastructural investments across the region (BLAU 2010; DORNBUSCH & WOLF 1994; EUROCONTROL 2015; KUNZE 2012).

In general, it appears that Eastern Germany has yet to experience significant, direct economic benefits from EU membership owing to particular conditions determined

by internal German socio-politically based decision-making – most notably adoption of wage rates that make Eastern Germany a relatively expensive production site, in particular in comparison to its former Socialist, Central European trade partners.

Eastern Germany's economic ties and interactions with its former Cold War era Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) partners remain a 'work in progress'. So, for example, while Germany's trade interactions, including expanding exports, have increased rapidly with Central Europe since the EU-8 joined the Union in 2004 (especially with Poland and Czechia), Eastern German trade totals have grown more slowly. Similarly, exchanges of FDI between Eastern Germany and its international neighbours are also not large (BERENTSEN 2013; LEHMANN et al. 2012). And, while tourism has grown rapidly in importance, especially in Berlin and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, proportions of visitors from both Poland and Czechia are relatively low (AMT FÜR STATISTIK 2014; DSTATIS STATISTISCHES BUNDESAMT 2014).

Had the GDR remained an independent state and outside the EU like other former Socialist Central European states, it seems likely that like those states, an independent GDR might have had similar economic outcomes – a lower current standard of living and a less problematic labour market. Of course, this argument is partially qualitatively based and open to analysis and debate (BERENTSEN 1998).

Along with the persistent gaps in economic outcomes between Western and Eastern Germany, there are also large regional variations in outcomes within Eastern Germany as well. Berlin, Dresden and Leipzig are the leading Eastern German economic centres, while many other cities – and especially some rural areas in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern north of Berlin – continue to lag (Table 5). West Berlin benefitted

Table 5: **Population of Eastern Germany's largest cities**

Population (000s)	1990	2000	2010
East Germany	18,185	17,232	16,326
1. Berlin	3,434	3,382	3,461
2. Leipzig	511	493	523
2. Dresden	491	478	523
4. Chemnitz	294	259	243
5. Halle	248	248	233
6. Magdeburg	278	231	231
7. Erfurt	209	201	205
8. Rostock	248	201	203

Bold indicates population increases from the prior period.

Source: DSTATIS STATISTISCHES BUNDESAMT 2015b

greatly from designation as national capital following unification, but less than some predicted – and de-industrialisation there related to loss of favourable West German Cold War policies (notably economic subsidies) in the post-unification era resulted in much slower development of Berlin than many people hoped or imagined (Fig. 1-2; Table 5). Still, as Germany’s capital, as the major urban centre in Eastern Germany, with improved infrastructure especially in what was East Berlin, and with a thriving cultural and tourism sector, both the city, and especially its nearby suburbs in Brandenburg are growing both economically and demographically. In relative terms, the new

Figures 1-2: Streets in Prenzlauerberg, eastern Berlin, 1978 (left) and 2013 (right)



Source: author

Figure 3: Improving housing and infrastructure remains a ‘work in progress’ in Eastern Germany (Chemnitz 2013)



Source: author

technology-oriented centre of Dresden (as well as to a lesser extent Erfurt) and the successful business, manufacturing and logistics hub Leipzig are also growing. Most

other cities as well as many towns and rural areas in Eastern Germany have experienced steep population declines, and more are predicted in economically languishing and demographically aging Eastern Germany (Table 3, Fig. 4).

Figures 4-5: **Much redevelopment and economic re-orientation of Eastern German cities remains to be completed (left: Frankfurt/Oder, 2013, right: Eisenhüttenstadt railway station, 2013)**



Source: author

Eastern German cities and regions lack the economic structure, export ties, business headquarters, and the transportation-communication accessibility of Western Germany (e.g., DORNBUSCH & WOLF 1994; ESPON 2013; KUNZE 2012; EUROCONTROL 2015). While transport-communication accessibility is improving, Eastern Germany remains at best on the edge of an expanded, and still expanding, set of goods, passenger, and information transportation-communication networks. Pan-European efforts and plans to better tie it together will help, but even after 25 years of German unification and ten years after the EU-8 expansion, much remains to be done to bring regions like Eastern Germany within the ‘mainstream’ of European market and information accessibility. For Eastern Germany, the long time lag in completing the new Berlin-Brandenburg airport remains part of its market accessibility problem.

3 Demographic impacts

One of the most important, potential impacts of EU accession in Eastern Germany might have been, and might still be, the migration of people from an expanding EU from other parts of Central Europe into the region. For a variety of reasons this potential migratory stream has yet to have very much impact, though there has been a

modest increase in EU-8 migration to Eastern Germany since 2005 (e.g., DOBSON 2009; LEHMANN et al. 2012). One reason for this is that Germany opted to delay any potential impacts of labour migration to it for several years after the EU-8 enlargements in 2004, thereby diverting the largest flows that instead then ensued from Poland to the United Kingdom. Lower wages and higher unemployment in Eastern in comparison to Western Germany have also meant that despite the former's long and now quite 'open' border to Poland, most migrants from Poland have gone to Western Germany, and even then not in huge numbers. Migration streams from other nearby EU-8 neighbours to Eastern Germany (e.g., Czechia, Slovakia and Hungary) have been much smaller and thus less controversial than in the United Kingdom during the post-2004 era (DOBSON 2009). For example, Berlin, only about 30 miles from the German-Polish border, had at the end of 2013 about 100,000 ethnic Polish residents, while many more Poles than that emigrated to the United Kingdom during 2009-2013 alone. Well over a half million Polish-born immigrants now live in the United Kingdom and the number has been growing annually (OFFICE OF NATIONAL STATISTICS 2014; PRUSZEWICZ 2014). Eastern Germany has a much smaller ethnic Polish population (less than 200,000) – only about 10% of Germany's estimated two million ethnic Poles (ZENSUS 2011). And, while Germany had about double the number of EU-8 migrants (nearly 400,000) than the United Kingdom in 2005, by 2013 the United Kingdom had many more (890,000) (GALOCZI 2014).

Overall, Germany's resident population includes nearly 10% of people who are not German citizens, but in Eastern Germany only Berlin has a comparable proportion, which along with Hamburg have Germany's highest foreign resident levels. The other five eastern states have by far the lowest levels of foreign residents among all German states, with levels less than one-half those in any Western German state (Table 6). Besides the economic disadvantages, and owing to occasional outbreaks of physical attacks and threats on foreigners in the region, many people in Germany believe that lack of integration and interaction of Eastern Germany with international neighbours' and other cultures have negative political and cultural impacts for the region. There are efforts to change this situation, some noted below.

Net out-migration, an aging population, and an interrelated low birth rate have meant that Eastern Germany has suffered severe population losses in recent decades, and more of the same is predicted for years to come (HERFERT 2007; RAGNITZ 2009). These combined domestic causes and the lack of international in-migration contribute to demographic decline and create problems for both market size and skilled labour development. These factors then contribute further to challenges for Eastern Germany to compete in economic terms within Germany, the EU, and the global economy (RAGNITZ 2009).

Table 6: **Rank and percent of resident population foreign in selected German states, 2014**

1.	Hamburg	14.5
2.	Berlin	14.4
	Germany	9.5
11.	Schleswig-Holstein	5.4
12.	Saxony [Sachsen]	2.6
13.	Brandenburg	2.4
14.	Sachsen-Anhalt	2.4
15.	Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	2.4
16.	Thuringia [Thüringen]	2.2

Source: DSTATIS STATISTISCHES BUNDESAMT 2015a

4 Geopolitical impacts

There have been some quite visible and dramatic, as well as less publicised and local-oriented, EU-related geopolitical impacts since the inclusion of the former GDR into the European Union. United Germany is now Europe's and the EU's most populous country and largest economy, and is playing a much bigger role in EU and global political and economic affairs. The FRG has extended its economic influence further into Europe, especially within East Central Europe.

German Chancellor Merkel and President Gauck are both former GDR citizens, and that has also likely helped increase FRG-EU-Russian interactions, possibly someday helping in the currently violence-wracked, politically tense case of Russian military incursions in Ukraine.

The western end of the under-Baltic Sea German-Russian North Stream natural gas pipeline on the Eastern German Baltic Coast well illustrates the complicated roles of Germany, their Eastern German leaders, and Russia within European and East-West politics. Arguably, North Stream has freed Germany's hand to pursue a stronger line over Ukraine. However, the fact that other countries in Central and Eastern Europe are more vulnerable from a suspension of Russian gas exports through Ukraine has ensured that the main costs for a strong German policy would potentially be borne by its eastern allies.

Eight years ago, shortly after German and Russian leaders agreed on the construction of the North Stream gas pipeline, then Polish defence minister Radoslaw

Sikorski called it “the Molotov-Ribbentrop pipeline” – a reference to the 1939 pact between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, which partitioned Central and Eastern Europe. According to him, Berlin had sacrificed solidarity with its eastern EU neighbours in order to pursue national interests. North Stream, he argued, would allow Russia to keep the flow of gas to Germany unaltered while it simultaneously turned off the tap and blackmailed governments in Central and Eastern Europe. In fact, during the current crisis in Ukraine, the very existence of the pipeline has allowed Germany to take a tougher stance towards Russia than many EU member states in Eastern Europe (SIDI 2014).

The impacts of North Stream on European and East-West geopolitics far outweighs the far smaller, localised economic impact of the pipeline on Eastern Germany.

Another important geopolitical outcome from Eastern German accession to the EU is that Berlin has become a more important European economic and, especially, important EU capital, perhaps the most important EU capital in all of Central and Eastern Europe – with due respect for the importance of other cities, quite notably Vienna. These two cities may lead and certainly will be among the future, major political and economic centres of a still emerging network of Central European centres that will inevitably establish ever better transport and business linkages with an already well-formed West European metro network.

And, in 1991, after nearly five decades of relative isolation from the West, Poland gained a politically accepted, peaceful border with both the EU and with a transformed, democratic Germany; Czechia gained a much longer border with Germany; and Sweden acquired a faster transport link to the EU, via its now expanded shipping links to former GDR ports on the Baltic Sea.

Some of the latter linkages have intensified owing to not so often reported, locally driven, formal and informal ties across the new EU-German borders with the EU-8 states. For example, Germany is more active nationally in Baltic Sea region cooperative efforts, and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern has more regional ties within the area as well. For example, this has been furthered by way of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern’s partnership with its Swedish and Danish Øresund-region neighbours and with many other partners to the south within ‘Scandria’. This organisation leads a transportation-focused effort to further development along a major EU north-south corridor from Scandinavia south to regions along both coasts of the Adriatic Sea.

Soon after German unification a number of other such bi-national cooperative efforts were begun between Poland and united Germany (FEDERAL FOREIGN OFFICE 2014b). These have been greatly furthered since 2011 when the last impediments to the completely free movement of people across the German-Polish border were lifted, both politically and physically. A Scandria partner, Oderpartnerschaft/Partnerstwo-Odra, is comprised of four Eastern German states and four neighbouring Polish voivodeships

along the Oder River that are working together to enhance economic development (ODER PARTNERSCHAFT 2015).

Economic and cultural ties have also developed among other border-region localities, as a 'grassroots' ('from below') effort between northwestern Poland and its one-time German dominated city, Szczecin, with people and institutions in parts of northeastern Germany within Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. KINDER & ROOS (2013) refer to this informally linked region as "Szczettinstan", based on its location on the long-contested German-Polish boundary area, near present-day Szczecin.

Despite these hopeful developments, it is also clear that yet more dismantling of 'borders in the minds' of German and Polish neighbours and more cross-border interaction is needed in order to achieve greater economic, social, and political success in these relatively poor and slowly developing border areas (HEINRICH 2010; KINDER & ROOS 2013).

Germany and Poland have established another 'hands across the border' project, with the joint founding of the European University Viadrina in the neighbouring Oder River towns of Frankfurt/Oder, Germany, and Śluby, Poland.

In still another local effort, the beautifully restored city of Görlitz and its one-time suburb, now the Polish town of Zgorzelec, have opened a pedestrian footbridge across the Neisse River – the author joined Polish and German Sunday-strollers across it in late 2014 (Fig. 6).

Figure 6: **Bridging a troubled past: pedestrian bridge over the Neisse River from Görlitz, Germany, to Zgorzelec, Poland (far side)**



Source: author

A range of similar neighbourly projects are also taking place along the Czech-German border. For example, a German-Czech Future Fund was founded in 1997 and

supports a variety of non-profit mutual exchange projects in “youth, culture, education, minorities, dialogue forums and publications.” A focus in 2015 includes bi-national projects that promote cross-border cooperation in civil society. The fund also finances a Czech-German Discussion Forum, with annual conferences that “addresses current issues in bilateral relations as part of the two countries’ partnership in the European Union” (FEDERAL FOREIGN OFFICE 2014a).

While the formal cross-border efforts between the states and informal activities among peoples from both sides of the borders are good steps to help lessen historically based problems between the countries and their peoples, progress seems neither rapid nor well-advanced along any of Eastern Germany’s former borders (LEHMANN et al. 2012). Cross-border migration, commuting, investment and tourism are not especially well developed, and several border cities have not recovered well from either their relatively peripheral locations within their own states and do not benefit significantly from cross-border interaction, most notably Frankfurt/Oder and Szczecin – especially in comparison to more rapid development not so far from the border regions around Prague [Praha], Poznań and Berlin.

5 Conclusion

Given conditions quite peculiar to FRG-GDR unification, including both the former’s massive support for Eastern Germany as well as an ultimately uncomplicated incorporation of Eastern Germany into the EU, one needs to be careful about trying to draw lessons and precedents from the EU’s first expansion into formerly Socialist-dominated Central Europe in October 1991. Still, DORNBUSCH & WOLF (1994), ROTHER & SÜPPEL (2003) and others argue that both the Eastern German and Central European states’ catch-up with the EU-12 will take longer than some originally believed, and many may want. This was already apparent in the Eastern German case by the turn of millennium, by which point an initial Eastern German growth spurt had tapered off, leaving it then as now far from having achieved equality in terms of job security, quality, and salaries in comparison to both Western Germany and the EU-12. Some of the EU-8, though still lagging behind, are possibly on a better current economic trajectory than Eastern Germany, notably Poland – though in other cases (e.g., Slovenia, Hungary and Bulgaria) this is also certainly not the case.

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